

Fw. Alfred Rauer: 4	3./NJG1	Lancaster	3 km W. Geel, 42 km E. Antwerpen (<i>Gemse</i>): 5.000 m.	23.02	61 Sqn Lancaster JA695
Fw. Lorenz Gerstmayr: 10	4./NJG3	4-mot	NW Aachen: 6.100 m.	23.03	Aachen raid, unidentified.
<i>Note: victory confirmed on 19.8.1944</i>					
Fw. Lorenz Gerstmayr: 11	4./NJG3	4-mot	NW Aachen: 6.000 m.	23.07	619 Sqn Lancaster LL784
Oblt. H.-Wolfgang Schnaufer: 51	Stab IV./NJG1	Lancaster	near Beerse, 6 km W. Turnhout: 5.300 m.	23.15	83 Sqn Lancaster ND389
Uffz. Hans Fischer: 2	12./NJG1	Lancaster	10 km W. Roermond: 5.600 m.	23.15	514 Sqn Lancaster LL639
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 3.-6./schw. Flak Abt. 514, 4./schw. Flak Abt. 446 and Flak Battr. z.b.V. 5780 ('Lancaster Grootbeersel 22.52 hrs'), Flak claim marked 'VNE', victory Uffz. Fischer confirmed on 18.8.1944</i>					
Fw. Lorenz Gerstmayr: 12	4./NJG3	4-mot	NW Aachen: 6.000 m.	23.19	635 Sqn Lancaster JB470
Oblt. H.-Wolfgang Schnaufer: 52	Stab IV./NJG1	Lanc/Halif	2 km N. St. Leonhard: 5.300 m	23.25	49 Sqn Lancaster LL899
Oblt. Werner Baake: 24	2./NJG1	Lancaster	Goeree (JH 91) (<i>Hamster</i>)	23.37	619 Sqn Lancaster EE116
Lt. Wolfgang Wenning: 1	Stab II./KG51	Fortress II	N. Ipswich: 300 m.	00.42	B-17G 42-97556 96 BG/413 BS
Hptm. Dietrich Puttfarcken	5./KG51	Spitfire	near Coltishall airfield (1352): 800 m.	00.50	VNE: ASM, 64 Sqn Spitfire BL581
Hptm. Dietrich Puttfarcken: 1	5./KG51	Halifax	near Lincoln (1482)	01.25	1654 CU Stirling LJ450

18-19 April 1944 FRENCH RAILWAY YARDS

811 Lancasters and Halifaxes, plus 36 Mosquitoes, obliterated four railway yards at Rouen, Juvisy, Noisy-le-Sec, and Tergnier, for the loss of just 11 of their number. Two aircraft of the French raids returned with fighter damage and four with Flak scars.

Over the target of Noisy-le-Sec, Flak of gem. Flak Abt. 344 claimed four Halifaxes of 427, 432 and 433 Squadrons destroyed in quick succession, three crashing at Noisy (at 23.47, 00.01 and 00.04 hrs), and one at Bobigny (at 23.45 hrs). A fifth victim of Flak, Lancaster LM361 of 9 Squadron, which had just completed its bombing run over Juvisy, was destroyed by 1./gem. Flak Abt. 496, falling at Massy at 23.40 hrs.

Under *Benito* control of 4. JD, at least 18 crews of NJG1 and NJG4 operated against the French raids between 22.43 and 01.18 hrs. These fighters tallied four Halifax Abschüsse over France. Between 22.47 and 22.55 hrs, nine Bf110 G-4s of II./NJG1 were scrambled from St. Dizier for *ungeführte Zahme Sau* duties. Oblt. Hager, the *Kapitän* of the 6. Staffel and his regular crew of Uffz's von Bergen and Körschgen, downed a Halifax of the Tergnier force with their *Schräge Musik* armament, a claim which was *anerkannt* on 6 July 1944. Their quarry, 158 Squadron LV954, crashed at Damery (Somme). Incidentally, in the same area, 51 Squadron Halifax LW522 and 158 Squadron Halifax LV946 were involved in a collision and crashed at Seraucourt-le-Grand.

A number of Bf110 G-4 crews of III./NJG1 left Laon-Athies at around 22.40-50 hrs. Hunting for the Tergnier force on their return track, the *Gruppenkommandeur* Oblt. Drewes dispatched two Halifaxes between Rouen and Dieppe. Fw. Erich Handke, his *Funker*, recalled,

'We took-off for a Wilde Sau sortie and flew a long way to the west to get into the returning Tergnier raiders near St. Quentin. We simply flew without any ground information towards the target markers until I gained a single contact heading west. We had to climb to 5,000 metres before we slowly caught up. At 500 metres range Drewes saw the enemy. As it was on a homeward course, he fired into the fuselage with the Schräge weapons and wiggled the rudder a bit as he did so, at which the Lancaster immediately caught fire in the fuselage and both wings. It then went down in great spirals with a monstrous shower of sparks (2-300 metres) trailing behind, which looked like a comet. It crashed NE of Rouen.

In the meantime I'd gained more contacts. We pursued one, and Drewes again saw the enemy at a range of 500 metres. At first it looked like a Lancaster, but to judge by the tail it must have been a new Halifax. After a burst from 50 metres below it was burning as nicely as the previous one and went down immediately, SW of Dieppe. I then gained a lot of contacts which were already out over the sea, but they were all going very quickly whilst losing height. We were now only 2,500 metres up. If we had been able to catch up to them at all, it would only have been at the English coast, in the light ack-ack belt. As our Radar could under no circumstances be allowed to fall into enemy hands, we were only permitted to chase the English to our own coast. In addition, we also didn't have a single life vest with us. As a result, we flew 30 km inland, against the remaining home-bound bombers, then turned in behind them, however we were soon over the sea again, barely catching them up, and only 1,500 metres up. As the return flights had just ended, we gave up and flew home. Behind us another attack on Rouen had started, but we had too little fuel to be able to do anything more.'

The crew returned to Laon-Athies at 01.22 hrs. Both Abschüsse were officially *anerkannt* on 6 July 1944.

In turn, 76 Squadron Halifax LW631 destroyed a 'Fw190' over Tergnier at 23.39 hrs and 169 Squadron Mosquito 'M' dispatched a Bf110 in the Soissons-Compiègne area at 23.43 hrs. Set against these claims, the Germans reported two Nachtjäger lost in air combat: Bf110 G-4 G9+HZ of II./NJG1 at Kapellen (the pilot being killed) and Bf110 G-4 3C+DT of 9./NJG4 at Thieuloy-Saint-Antoine (the *Bordfunker* perishing).

16 intruder crews of II./KG51 were detailed to attack night fighter bases in the Cambridge, Lincoln and Hull areas in support of a heavy German bombing attack by 125 aircraft on London. They mixed with the returning bomber streams over the UK, shooting down three Lancasters of 115 and 625 Squadrons and damaging a 576 Squadron Lancaster, all from the Rouen raid. In turn, two of the intruders fell foul of British Mosquitoes, a third Me410 was wrecked in a single-engine landing at Bergen/Alkmaar airfield.

Meanwhile, in the north, the I. Jagdkorps reacted in force against a major *Gardening* operation by 168 'heavies' to Swinemünde, Kiel Bay, and the Danish coast. At a very early hour, starting at 21.38 hrs, small elements of NJG3 plus several Gruppen of NJG1, 2 and 5 were scrambled and, whilst being told that *'Flak has been warned'* and *'the bombers are still far away to the west'*, these were first gathered over *FF Quelle* and later over *FF's Philipp* and *Ludwig*. This potent fighter force, however, was never released against the mine-layers, probably because their controllers were expecting a threat against a German city to develop. Those Nachtjäger of NJG3 and 5 that were milling over *Philipp*, for example, were repeatedly told to remain there, whilst receiving intermittent plots on the *Gardening* force. At 00.33 hrs, these fighters were finally given landing orders.

As the *Gardeners'* approached the Danish coast (crossing in over Westerland), some ten Bf110 G-4 crews of IV./NJG3 were scrambled from Westerland at around 23.15-20 hrs, with orders to take up holding positions in the *Himmelbett* boxes on the western coast of Jutland. When the mine-layers (estimated by the German plotters as '100 aircraft') had all passed through the *Himmelbett Räume* on the Western Danish coast, the Gruppe was later diverted to freelance pursuit duties. Lt. Heilig of the *Gruppenstab* was the only successful pilot, claiming two Stirlings shot down. Lt. Heilig's second victim (of 149 Squadron) was also claimed destroyed by *Marine* Flak from a 10.5 cm Flak battery at Gammelby near Esbjerg, but the Nachtjäger was officially credited with the kill. Two *Gardeners* returned damaged from sharp encounters with Nachtjäger and four with Flak scars. 218 Squadron Stirling LJ447 was attacked by a fighter 8 km south of Ribe at 23.18 hrs; the front and rear gun turrets were put out of action and serious damage was inflicted on the Stirling but it managed to shake off the Nachtjäger.

Furthermore, the I. Jagdkorps sent up around 50 crews of NJG3 from Vechta (I. Gruppe), Stade (III. Gruppe) and Nordholz (7. Staffel and IV. Gruppe) on *Zahme Sau* duties against the *Gardening* force. The running commentary controller of 2. JD fed these fighters with continuous plots on the mine-layers from 00.02 to 01.38 hrs over the Flensburg, Kiel and Rostock areas. At 00.47 hrs, the fighters were told of returning bombers and were sent on a course of 330 degrees (NNW) to intercept the 'heavies' north west of Flensburg. The Tame Boars were repeatedly urged to carry out this instruction until 00.54 hrs when they were ordered to change their course to 90 degrees (due east) and make for Rostock and were then informed that they were *'too late in the north'*. 17 minutes later, this course was modified again to 60 degrees (ENE) and, at 01.13 hrs, the fighters were finally sent to meet the 'heavies' over the island of Fehmarn. Even though there was little cloud and good visibility, it appears that none of these crews managed to achieve *Feindberührung*. The Nachtjäger were finally ordered to land at 01.38 hrs; all Nachtjäger of NJG3 returned safely to their bases.

Hptm. Josef Krahforst: 2	2./NJG4	Halifax	Montdidier area (SF): 5.000 m.	23.46	51 Sqn Halifax HX350
Oblt. Johannes Hager: 13	6./NJG1	Halifax	16 km NE Montdidier: 4.000 m.	23.52	158 Sqn Halifax LV954
Oblt. Martin Drewes: 18	Stab III./NJG1	Halifax	30 km NE Rouen: 5.000 m.	00.01	466 Sqn Halifax LV956
Oblt. Martin Drewes: 19	Stab III./NJG1	Halifax	SW Dieppe: 5.000 m.	00.11	640 Sqn Halifax LW722.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of 4./gem. Flak Abt. 344 ('Halifax Caux 00.10 hrs'), Flak claim marked 'VNE', victory Oblt. Drewes confirmed on 6.7.1944</i>					
Lt. Bruno Heilig: 3	Stab IV./NJG3	Stirling	10-20 km W. Haderslev (PT 7): 4.500 m.	00.23	75 Sqn Stirling EH955
Lt. Bruno Heilig: 4	Stab IV./NJG3	Stirling	25 km W. Römö Island (QR 45): 3.500 m.	00.46	149 Sqn Stirling LJ504.
<i>Note: also claimed by Marine Flak of 5./M. Flak Abt. 204, victory Lt. Heilig confirmed on 21 July 1944</i>					
Hptm. Dietrich Puttfarcken: 2	5./KG51	Lancaster	30 km S. King's Lynn (033)	02.25	115 Sqn Lancaster LL667
Oblt. Klaus Bieber: 1	5./KG51	Lancaster	Cambridge	02.25	115 Sqn Lancaster LL867
Lt. Wolfgang Wenning: 2	Stab II./KG51	Halifax	NW Hull	03.47	625 Sqn Lancaster ME734

20-21 April 1944 VARIOUS TARGETS

Bomber Command mounted five Main Force raids. The total number of sorties dispatched (1,155) underlined the fast growing striking power of the RAF strategic bomber force, and set a new wartime record. The disordered and late actions and meagre Abschuss tally of its main adversary, the Nachtjagd, on the other hand, illustrated the slowly diminishing German capability of putting up a solid defence against the bombers. The multiplicity of the targets that were attacked on this night (four transportation raids, all aimed at railway targets in France, at Lens, Chambly, La Chapelle and Ottignies) plus a major raid against Köln, surprised and confused the Nachtjagd controllers.

From 22.21 to 00.40 hrs, Tame Boars were sent from northern and north west Germany and the Netherlands to beacon *Ida* near Bonn as a cover for any penetration into German airspace. This activity began when the 2. JD controller at Stade began broadcasting his first orders, initially sending fighters of NJG3 to *FF Marie*. At 22.35 hrs, these fighters were directed to *FF Philipp*, where they were joined by elements of NJG5. Finally, fighters of NJG1 and 2 were given the same order at 22.50 hrs, whilst being told *'not to worry about Flak'*. Ironically, a Ju88 C-6 of 4./NJG3 was shot down by 'friendly' Flak fire at Laer near Bochum, the crew of three all perishing.

At 23.20 hrs, the mass of Tame Boars were told to proceed to beacon *Ida* and informed that *'the bombers are flying on a course of 160 degrees (SSE)'*. They were also given plots on heavy bombers in an area north east of Laon and told that there were other raiders to the south west flying towards Paris, and yet others over the Scheldt. The order to go to *FF Ida* was repeated until 23.43 hrs, interspersed with plots on the bombers, which were given in the Brussels area at 23.34 hrs, and north of Paris flying on a course of 300 degrees (WNW) at 23.40 hrs. The strong force of Nachtjäger milling over *FF Ida* was never released and finally ordered to land at around midnight.

Meanwhile, elements of NJG1 (under 3. JD control) and NJG4 (4. JD) attempted to intercept the 196 'heavies' that attacked Ottignies. These included a Bf110 G-4 in the hands of Hptm. Drewes, *Kommandeur* of III./NJG1, who had been scrambled from Laon-Athies on *Wilde Sau* duties at 22.38 hrs, and the Bf110 G-4 of the *Kommodore* of NJG4 Major Thimmig, who had become airborne from Chenay at 22.40 hrs for his 134th *Feindflug*. The controller of 3. JD, however, misjudged the inward course of this bomber stream: at 22.52 hrs NJG1 were told that the force had turned due east as they made landfall at the mouth of the Scheldt and were ordered north. Eight minutes later, this order was reversed and they were sent on a course of 180 degrees (due south), with a warning that the raiders were flying south-east, but then it was already too late to intercept. NJG4, meanwhile, had been given plots of the Ottignies-bound bomber stream north of St. Quentin at 23.02 hrs and ordered on to a course of 260 degrees (almost due west), but only after 23.13, a few minutes before the attack on Ottignies, were they sent on a course to intercept. Just one exchange of fire occurred over the target, the 635 Squadron Lancaster involved in the incident later crashing near Wavre, Belgium.

The Nachtjagd reaction to a 175 aircraft raid on Lens came too late. Fighters of NJG4 were directed by 4. JD into the area north of Amiens at 00.10 hrs and told to fly on a course of 350 degrees (almost due north), when the force had already passed this point. As a result, only one bomber was engaged by an unidentified Nachtjäger on its return flight from Lens. Halifax JP113 'Git up them stairs' of 428 Squadron was badly shot up, three crew members baling out as ordered after the fighter attack. The pilot managed to keep the aircraft in the air, only to crash near Attlebridge in Norfolk on return to the UK. Another Lens raider, outward-bound 420 Squadron Halifax LW692,



428 Squadron Halifax JP113 'Git up them stairs' was badly shot up by an unidentified Nachtjäger over France whilst on its return flight from a raid against Lens on 20-21 April 1944 and crashed on return to the UK (Coll. Eddie Scott Jones).



was hit by unidentified Flak over Dieppe and crashed into the La Scie River at Pourville-sur-Mer. One aircraft of the Lens raid returned to the UK with minor Flak damage.

La Chapelle, situated in the 18th District in the northern suburbs of Paris, was attacked by 269 aircraft in two waves, one hour apart. After the conclusion of the first attack, a number of Nachtjäger were ordered to fly to Paris at 00.49 hrs. Six of the La Chapelle raiders were lost, three of which were shot down by two aces of NJG1 and NJG4. Whilst flying straight and level on its bombing run, a 207 Squadron Lancaster was shot down from below and behind by Hptm. Drewes. Trailing large flames from its engines, the 'heavy' crashed vertically beside a metro station at Antony, north of Palaiseau. Fw. Handke, *Bordfunker* to Drewes, recalls,

'South of Paris I found one which was turning to the north, towards the target. We caught up quickly, as we had to lose 1,000 metres altitude, and at 2,000 metres we were below the machine, which Drewes soon saw at 300 metres range. We were heading straight into the Flak, so we had to hurry our attack up. It was a Lancaster again. First we fired a long burst which passed behind it, dropped a bit, fired a burst which missed in front, pulled up again and finally our shells went into the starboard wing. We were only 30 metres below it, and the brightly-burning Lancaster fell from the sky like a stone. We immediately dived away, but we couldn't get clear. I was already thinking, 'Now it's going to cut our starboard wing off', when it sheared away a little to the right and went down right past us not 5 metres away to starboard. We saw nothing more, we were completely dazzled as we'd looked right into the burning Lancaster. At last we pulled ourselves together and got ourselves headed south west out of the Flak. Here and there we could see the odd shell going off, the Lancaster had crashed in the meantime. It had been on an inbound flight, with bombs.' The Drewes/Handke team returned to Laon-Athies at 01.28 hrs; their claim was *anerkannt* on 6 July 1944.

Hptm. Söthe of 4./NJG4, probably flying a Do217 N, claimed two *Viermots* shot down. His victims have been identified as 619 Squadron Lancaster W4127, which was reportedly shot down by a 'Ju88' some ten minutes after leaving La Chapelle, and a 97 Squadron Lancaster, which crashed at Piscop following a night fighter attack. The later claim, however, was subsequently probably rejected by the *Abschusskommission*. The *Kommodore* of NJG4 Major Thimmig and his crew of Ofw. Steckemetz (BF) and Fw. Jörgl (BS) claimed a 'heavy' shot down with a single burst of *Schräge Musik* cannon fire from their Bf110 G-4 to the south of Paris, a claim that was officially confirmed by the *Abschusskommission* on 6 July 1944. In his *Gefechtsbericht*, Thimmig reported that his adversary, which he identified as 'probably a Lancaster' went down trailing flames from both wings and fuselage and that the crew of seven were all killed in the crash near Morsang. Modern investigations identified this aircraft as 44 Squadron Lancaster ND573, which, according to a witness, crashed most likely with a full bomb load at Morsang-sur-Orge at 00.30 hrs. The aircraft exploded on impact with such force that the Germans were only able to find a few scattered human remains which they took away to their camp at Brettigny-sur-Orge. After the war, no bodies could be located and in 1950, the missing crew were recorded as having no known grave.

Paris-based Flak was credited with the destruction of two La Chapelle raiders, eight Main Force aircraft returning with slight Flak damage:

-467 Sqn Lancaster ND732: hit by 1.-3./gem. Flak Abt. 496 and 4./lei. Flak Abt. 958, impacted at Le Blanc-Mesnil at 01.36 hrs.

-57 Sqn Lancaster LL893: hit by 1. & 2./gem. Flak Abt. 344, crashing into the Avenue Michelet at Saint-Ouen at 01.39 hrs.

In return, the gunners on board 49 Squadron Lancaster ND533 of the La Chapelle force claimed to have shot down a 'Fw190' near Paris at 00.56 hrs, and 141 Squadron Mosquito 'S' destroyed a Do217 N-1 of 5./NJG4 at Meulan, north west of Paris.

Towards the end of all the action over France, a fifth Bomber Command raid comprising 357 Lancasters and 22 Mosquitoes penetrated into Belgian airspace and headed for Köln. Mosquito attacks on the Nachtjagd bases of Twente and Vechta, and intruder patrols over the Low Countries supported the raid. Surprisingly, this raid went virtually unopposed by the Nachtjagd during the approach route. This can be explained by the fact that the approach of the Köln force was not plotted by the I. Jagdkorps coastal Radar stations until it had reached a point some 40-50 km NW of the Scheldt Estuary. There were no previous reports of the German radio intercept service available to the Nachtjagd controllers. The air situation picture was further confused by a force of 130 German bombers simultaneously returning from an attack on Hull, which made it very difficult to keep track of the course of the Köln-bound bomber stream. Fifteen Me410s of II./KG51 supported the Hull raid with intruder attacks on airfields in the Cambridge area. Fw. Delp, BF to Lt. Wenning, TO of Stab II./KG51, claimed a 'P-47' shot down. Two Me410s were lost in accidents on take-off and landing, one crew being killed.

As a result, the I. Jagdkorps reaction to the Köln raid came too late. The Korps made a massive defensive effort by sending up 110 twin-engined Nachtjäger from 17 bases throughout Germany, and from the Netherlands, to engage the Köln raid, but almost all of these were sent up too late to make contact with the bombers. The only Nachtjäger to score an *Abschuss* against the Köln raid, the *Staffelkapitän* of 7./NJG1 Oblt. Witzleb was credited with the destruction of an outward-bound 625 Squadron Lancaster over the Belgian coast. At 01.53 hrs, only five minutes before the first target markers began to fall over Köln, the JLO of 3. JD at Deelen made his first move. Probably expecting a deeper penetration into the Reich, however, he ordered his fighters of NJG1 and 2 not to fly to the Köln area but to *FF Otto* near Frankfurt. The bombers at this time were said to be flying south east. Six minutes later their course was said to have changed to a north easterly direction, and at 02.15 hrs the Tame Boars of NJG1 and 2, plus elements of NJG3, were diverted northwards and westwards to points which were all too far north of the bombers' track. At 01.53 hrs, the Mainz-Finthen airfield controller became active, scrambling elements of III./NJG5; at 02.18 hrs, he announced to these Nachtjäger the presence of bombers in the Mainz area. Ten minutes later, this controller was reporting the raid over Köln, and by 02.33 hrs was including 26 Bf110 G-4s of NJG6 plus a Ju88 of the *Luftbeobachterstaffel* of this Geschwader, which had all been scrambled between 01.50 and 02.05 hrs in his *Reportage*. The KTB of Stab NJG6 commented the following day, 'Surprising incursion of an enemy formation with a bombing attack on Köln (200 aircraft). Enemy was only plotted when already over the Continent and orders for take-off for own units therefore came much too late.'

Apart from Oblt. Witzleb, the only I. Jagdkorps fighters that could make contact with the 'heavies' were elements of IV./NJG5 from Mainz-Finthen and III./NJG2, the latter Gruppe taking off from Twente shortly after 23.00 hrs. The *Gruppenkommandeur* Hptm. Berthold Ney with a tally of six confirmed Abschüsse was shot down by a prowling Mosquito only minutes after leaving Twente. The *Experte* baled out of his Ju88 C-6 unscathed before it crashed at Avest/Beltrum, some 25 km SW of Twente, but both his crew members were injured in the process. These two Gruppen were initially scrambled with orders to fly in the direction of *FF Ida* and then directed to provide protection over Köln. From 02.06 hrs onwards a few of their number did appear over Köln but, due to the prevailing bad visibility over the city, they showed little aggressive spirit and achieved no Abschüsse. Instead, the bombers encountered a heavy barrage of the 7. Flak Division over the target, in which three Lancasters were shot down and eight damaged:

-100 Sqn Lancaster ND785: hit by 5./schw. Flak Abt. 514 and Flak Battr. z.b.V. 5780 and exploded, debris scattering over a wide area at Jülich at 02.10 hrs.

-15 Sqn Lancaster LL754: hit by 1., 2., 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 381 and 2./schw. Flak Abt. 666, impacted at Köln-Nippes at 02.15 hrs.

-115 Sqn Lancaster DS728: hit by 1., 2., 4. & 5./schw. Flak Abt. 666, 3./schw. Flak Abt. 465 and 5./schw. Flak Abt. 135, crashing at Köln at 02.25 hrs.

Fw. Stillger of 7./JG300 claimed a *Viermot* destroyed over Köln at 23.18 hrs and Ofw. Wischnewski of 1./JG300 two *Viermot* Abschüsse at unspecified times and locations, none of which are documented in the RLM/OKL victory claims lists. According to the I. Jagdkorps KTB, however, the only single-engined fighters that were sent up on this night were committed to engage a Mosquito nuisance raid on Berlin, entirely without success.

The raid on Köln was not reported in the *Laufende Reportages* for the twin-engined Tame Boars until 02.28 hrs, one minute after the bombing attack had ended. Soon after, most of the Tame Boars were ordered to land again. 11./NJG5 lost Bf110 G-4 C9+BV in a crash at Erfurt at 02.45 hrs, its crew perishing. After taking off from Florennes at 01.39 hrs in Bf110 G-4 D5+BS to try and catch a straggler from the Köln raid on the homeward track, Hptm. Zorner (who had been appointed *Kommandeur* of III./NJG5 on 1 April) intercepted a Bomber Support Serrate Mosquito that was flying home on one engine. Following an eight-minute chase, he shot it down in a single attack from behind at a distance of 50 metres near Tourinnes-Saint-Lambert. In turn, Zorner lost one of his *Staffelkapitäne*, Oblt. Tischtau of the 8. Staffel. Flying Bf110 G-4 C9+AS, the six-victory ace was shot down and killed by Mosquito 'P' of 169 Squadron to the east of Köln; his BF and BS both baled out of their Messerschmitt safely before it crashed at Altenkirchen/Westerwald. A 101 Squadron Lancaster escaped damaged from a sharp encounter with a Ju88 attacking with *Schräge Musik* near Namur at 02.57 hrs, the Köln force reporting no other incidents on the homeward track.

In all, six Nachtjäger of the I. Jagdkorps were lost during the defensive operations on this night.

Oblt. Hans-Joachim Witzleb: 5	7./NJG1	Lancaster	60-80 km NW Lille: 3.200 m.	00.06	625 Sqn Lancaster ME731
Maj. Wolfgang Thimmig: 20	Stab NJG4	prob. Lanc.	near Morsang, 7 km NNE Brétigny (i.Zus.Arb.): 3.600 m.	00.38	44 Sqn Lancaster ND573.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of gem. Flak Abt. 496 ('Lancaster Morsang 00.36 hrs'), victory Maj. Thimmig confirmed on 6.7.1944</i>					
Hptm. Martin Drewes: 20	Stab III./NJG1	Lancaster	est. 30 km SSW Paris: 2.300 m.	00.40	207 Sqn Lancaster ND564.
<i>Note: also claimed by Flak of gem. Flak Abt. 496 ('Lancaster Antony 00.35 hrs'), Flak claim marked 'VNE', victory Hptm. Drewes confirmed on 6.7.1944</i>					
Hptm. Fritz Söthe	4./NJG4	4-mot	N. Paris: 4.000 m.	00.50	VNE: ASM, prob. 97 Sqn Lancaster ND748.
<i>Note: claim not listed in OKL/RLM 4./NJG4 Confirmed Abschussübersicht, probably rejected</i>					
Hptm. Fritz Söthe: 4	4./NJG4	4-mot	50-100 km N. Paris: 4.000 m.	00.53	619 Sqn Lancaster W4127
Hptm. Paul Zorner: 39	Stab III./NJG5	Mosquito	20 km SE Brussels: 4.000 m.	03.06	169 Sqn Mosquito DD616
Fw. Gustav Delp (BF to Lt. Wenning): 1	Stab II./KG51	P-47	N. Cambridge	05.10	7 (P)AFU Magister II

22-23 April 1944 DÜSSELDORF BRAUNSCHWEIG LAON

Towards the end of the month of April, a series of deep penetration raids into Germany were again mounted, to which the I. and the II. Jagdkorps replied with moderately successful Tame Boar operations.

As darkness descended on the evening of the 22nd April, at 20.55 hrs, 14 intruder Me410s of II./KG51 were scrambled from Soesterberg, Eindhoven and Gilze-Rijen and flew on a straight course to the Brussels area. To the west of the Belgian capital, the *Fernnachtjäger* began shadowing a stream of 270 B-24s from the 2nd USAAF Bomb Division, which were returning from a raid against Hamm. The fighters were under strict orders only to begin their attacks on the American 'heavies' during their landing approaches on the fully lit-up airfields in Norfolk and Suffolk. At 22.04 hrs, Fw. Trenke of 6./KG51 dispatched a 'Fortress II', which has actually been identified as a Liberator of 448 BG/715 BS. A mass of flames, the bomber plunged into the sea off Hopton. This was the start of an intense, 26 minutes air battle, in which the Me410s wreaked havoc among the Liberators in the night skies over Norfolk and Suffolk. The *Fernnachtjagd* crews returned with claims for nine heavy bombers shot down and one unidentified aircraft destroyed. In the darkness of the night, they had identified seven of their victims as 'Halifaxes'. With regard to the mis-identifications, the St.Kpt. of 1./KG51 Oblt. Csursky offered an interesting explanation after the war, 'Most of the time we didn't see anything more than a gray

patch, and we could really only make out whether the aircraft had a single or a double tail.' In addition, five airfields were bombed by the intruders. Uffz. Baier of 6./KG51 opened fire at six *Viermots* flying at a height of 800 metres and observed three catching fire and crashing. In turn, one Me410 A-1 of 6./KG51 was shot down (Oblt. Krüger and his *Funker* killed) in return fire from B-24J 42-109915 of 389BG/565 BS east of Norwich, the Liberator also crashing with the loss of six crew members.

A reinforcement wave of II./KG51, led by the *Kapitän* of the 5. Staffel Hptm. Dietrich Puttfarken, left Soesterberg at 21.54 hrs, penetrating straight into East Anglia. Another wave was likewise sent to the same area after midnight, these waves totalling eight Me410s. Uffz. Brügel and his 4./KG51 crew of the last wave returned with a 'Halifax' Abschuss, which has actually been identified as a 42 OTU Albemarle which was shot down whilst on a training flight near Lowestoft. The Me410 of Hptm. Puttfarken, who was engaged in his 5th *Fernnachtjagd* sortie, failed to return to Soesterberg. The *Ritterkreuzträger* and his *Funker* Ofw. Willi Lux most probably crashed into the North Sea, both men remain missing to this day.

The intruders destroyed or heavily damaged 14 B-24s, plus an Albemarle. 41 American and British crewmen were killed and another 23 injured.

Whilst the carnage was taking place over eastern England, three separate bomber streams from RAF Bomber Command were on their way to bomb Düsseldorf (577 aircraft, 29 lost), to Braunschweig (238 Lancasters, four lost), and Laon (181 aircraft, nine failing to return). The I. Jagdkorps dispatched a total of 78 single-engined fighters (of JG300, 301, 302 and I./NJG10) and 216 twin-engined fighter sorties against all three raids, which reported 42 Abschüsse for seven losses of their own. In addition, the II. Jagdkorps (4. JD) in France employed 12 twin-engined fighters of NJG4; these filed 12 Abschüsse for two losses of their own.

The Nachtjagd controllers were first confronted with the Laon force that was plotted on a S.S.E. course over the Channel, crossing the French coast at 22.39 hrs. After these 'heavies' had penetrated into the area north of Paris, at 23.05 hrs (15 minutes before the Laon attack began), the first of about 15 Bf110 G-4s and Ju88 C-6s of I./NJG4 were scrambled from Florennes and sent to Laon (a 120 km flight), whilst being given plots on the 'heavies' over Amiens and west of Laon. Around the same time, 11 Bf110 G-4s of II./NJG1 were sent up from St. Dizier and also directed to Laon, as were elements of III./NJG1 from Laon-Athies. By 23.19 hrs, the Nachtjäger

During the Laon raid of 22-23 April 1944, Uffz. Beyer of 1./NJG4 notched up his first victory of the war shooting down 7 Squadron Lancaster ND592 J-Johnnie near Maizy. At 23.32 hrs, the aircraft exploded and broke into two halves, both parts landing in a field to the west of Maizy, at a place called 'the burnt walnut tree', with the loss of all seven crew members. Depicted on the far left is P/O Aslett (pilot), 4th from left is P/O Cooper (Nav.) and on the far right is P/O Noakes DFC, rear gunner (Coll. Wendy Gatensby).



were told that flares were being dropped and that the raiders had almost reached Laon, flying at a height of between 3,000 and 3,500 metres on a south easterly course. The fighters entered the bomber stream over the target and, at 23.49 hrs, the JLO of 4. JD ordered his fighters to 'remain with the bombers'. This they did successfully. The Tame Boars tallied a total of 11 Abschüsse before the Laon force headed out by way of Calais. In return, a twin-engined aircraft was claimed destroyed by the rear gunner of outward-bound 7 Squadron Lancaster ND588, during a combat that took place near Licy-Clignon at 23.37 hrs.

The St.Kpt. of 6./NJG1 Oblt. Hager, flying in Bf110 G-4 G9+HP, fired a burst of 40 rounds from his *Schräge Musik* into the fuselage and port wing of a 77 Squadron Halifax; the ace witnessed how his adversary was engulfed in flames before it exploded into three large pieces at a height of 1,000 m to the SSW of Laon. (The Abschuss was *anerkannt* by the OKL/RLM on 6 July 1944). Oblt. Schmidt, St.Kpt. of 8./NJG1 and his regular crew of Fw's Schönfeld (*Funker*) and Schlosser (BS), flying Bf110 G-4 G9+GS, was the top-scoring Nachtjagd crew against the Laon force, shooting down a Halifax, a Lancaster and a Stirling in *ungeführte Zahme Sau* fashion. In 1989, Fw. Schönfeld recalled his 19th, 20th, and 21st *Abschussbeteiligungen* (and Schmidt's 16th-18th confirmed victories), which were *anerkannt* on 6 September 1944,

'On this sortie the SN 2 had taken us into the bomber stream and then they became the victims of our guns. First a Halifax, then a Lancaster, and then a Short Stirling. They crashed way down below. I was struck as usual by melancholy when I saw the red glow of a dying fire. I urged the pilot onto the next one. Then the port engine revealed itself to be damaged, the coolant escaping in a milky trail. Soon the pistons would seize up. So Dieter stopped the engine. Our G9+HS struggled on with one engine. Radio bearings gave only uncertain results. Only Laon-Athies gave a reliable one. I requested searchlight or rocket assistance but there was nothing in sight. We are at 1200 metres and going down. The ground station hears me with strength 2-3, that means we are 80-100 km from Laon and now at 1100 metres. 'We must bale out', I suggest. A belly landing in this hilly area is suicide. Wilhelm goes first and gets caught in the Schräge Musik. I turn round and help him, interrupting my continuous SOS calls. Then he's clear at 900 metres. Then it's my turn. I lay on the

Below and opposite page: Oblt. Dieter Schmidt, St.Kpt. of 8./NJG1 achieved his 16th - 18th confirmed Abschüsse on 22-23 April 1944 in the Laon area, downing Halifax HX189 of 419 Squadron at Couvron-et-Aumencourt, France at 23.33 hrs, Lancaster JB684 of 405 Squadron 48 minutes later at Condé-sur-Aisne, and 218 Squadron Stirling EH942 at 00.26 hrs which came down 18 km SW of Soissons. Personnel of 8./NJG1 are seen inspecting the burnt-out remains of Halifax II HX189 the next day. The crew's tail gunner, Sgt. V.A. Knox RCAF was killed, four of the crew evading capture and two being taken prisoner of war. Fw. Schönfeld, *Bordfunker* to Oblt. Schmidt, comments on the devastating fire power of the 3 cm cannon that were installed in Nachtjagd aircraft during the spring of 1944: 'About this time we had 3-cm forward-firing cannon. The effect of these shells was indescribable. I have seen their explosive effect at one of our Abschüsse near Couvron. The bomber's fuselage had been ripped open wide enough to take the body of a man. So it was not surprising to have fragments from an Abschuss flying about our ears. It's a funny feeling to have the coolers damaged by small splinters. The result was a coughing engine, single-engined flight, perhaps a passable belly landing or baling out. Because of this we belly-landed twice and had to bale out once'. (Coll. Dr. Dieter Schmidt-Barbo and Kurt Schönfeld).



port wing, saying 'I'm getting out', at about 400 metres height. Then I let go, drop from the wing and watch the tail unit pass over me. The silhouette of the aircraft disappears at once. I pull the ripcord. A sausage, thick and white appears between my legs, a jerk at the shoulders, a somersault backwards, then I'm hanging in the parachute. One feels nothing: no fear of the landing, no thought of anyone, only the simple and elementary feeling: I am still alive.

A flame shot up behind me: the end of our kite. Then the earth came up. To the left a dark patch, to the right a lighter one. How am I going to land? I want to correct the landing with the lines, then I'm down, roll over and over, the 'chute collapses around me. I remain lying down, my pistol in my hand with the safety catch off. They had said that this is a partisan area. Mechanically I look for one but find nothing. I remove the harness, smoke a relieved cigarette and want to stand up, but my left foot won't function. I limp towards the fire, still clutching the pistol. Someone comes towards me, stops when I stop, continues when I do. His upper part clothed white or gray. That must be - 'Wilhelm?' - 'Kurt!'. We continue together: He'd also had problems, he'd fallen on a heap of stones. Where is the boss? We fire red recognition lights, call out. We limp on. At last we get a reply to our signals. We come closer - the boss has survived, although he had only got out at 300 metres after two unsuccessful attempts. Our meeting and 'rebirth' celebration takes place by our burning kite and is accompanied by the sound of exploding ammunition, a veritable feu de joie. Then we limped 5 km to the nearest village, spent an hour-and-a-half seeking a means of transport in front of a boulanger's house. But the mistress of the house did not open the door. 'J'ai peur, je me suis choqué!' Well, in the end we got coffee and Schnaps, from the postmaster, which took effect as soon as it touched our lips. The pilot informed base and soon the commander turned up with a car to collect us.

When I read the notes in the diary which I had kept some 45 years ago, they appear as the writings of a brash young man. But there is also sadness and resignation. This continues between the lines throughout. Frustration is not the right word, rather sadness. I am not surprised that in the end the point of it all is put in question. It was there at the beginning of the war, was pushed aside under the pressure of events, and then forced itself ever more critically into the mind. The end was near, and we felt like rats leaving a sinking ship. There was no longer talk of victory and even less of new weapons. There was no longer any faith. There was only hope, like a small twig on a dead tree-trunk. That was not enough.'

Meanwhile, the I. Jagdkorps coastal Radar stations detected a second large bomber stream approaching the French coast on a southerly course, which flew into northern France at around midnight. The Nachtjagd reaction against this force, heading for Düsseldorf, was on a massive scale. After battling with the Laon raiders at 00.33 hrs, fighters from I./NJG4 were sent towards Florennes by their 4. JD controller and were given plots of the incoming Düsseldorf raid, which was then just north of their home base. In addition, elements of 13 twin-engined fighter Gruppen were sent up from Nachtjagd bases throughout Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium and given large numbers of plots on the bombers. II./NJG3, for example, was sent up from Langendiebach at around midnight and ordered to fly to *FF Ida* near Bonn at 00.05 hrs, IV./NJG1 was scrambled from St. Trond a few minutes after midnight, as were I./NJG5 (Stendal) and III./NJG5 (from Mainz-Finthen). The *Kommandeur* of III./NJG5 Hptm. Zorner was scrambled for his 75th *Feindflug* in Bf110 G-4 D5+BS at 00.01 hrs. III./NJG2 became airborne from Twente between around 00.05 and 00.20 hrs, I./NJG1 from Venlo at 00.10-15 hrs, and I./NJG2 was scrambled from Langensalza at around 00.30 hrs. In southern Germany, 7. JD sent up 27 Bf110 G-4s of I. and II./NJG6 from Illenheim and Echterdingen at around midnight, both Gruppen heading for *FF Otto* near Frankfurt, as did two *Luftbeobachter*



The Kommandeur of I./NJG2 Hptm. Ernst Zechlin bagged his 7th and 8th confirmed victories during the 22-23 April 1944 Düsseldorf raid. Standing by his Ju88 at Langensalza airfield on 12 May 1944, one of his legs was shot through in an American fighter strafing attack. His leg was amputated, which abruptly ended Zechlin's career in the Nachtjagd (Coll. Jörn Junker).

Ju88s of NJG6. In addition, 7. JD scrambled another ten Bf110s of II./NJG5 from Leipheim at 00.12 hrs, also with initial orders to head for beacon *Otto*. Finally, elements of the Fw190-equipped NJGr.10 were sent up from Bonn-Hangelar at around 00.50 hrs, Fw. Rullkötter later noting in his *Flugbuch*, 'Scrambled in Fw190 *'White 15'* at 00.49 hrs, broke off sortie as undercarriage did not retract.'

At 01.03 hrs, the Nachtjagd controllers recognised the turning point on the outward-bound route of the Düsseldorf force at Malmédy, 'the raiders have turned NE to the south of Liège' and fed the mass of fighters into the stream via radio beacons *Ida, Meise, Kuecken, Murmeltier* and *Otto* on the latter stages of the outward-bound route. However, the *Laufende Reportage* controllers announced Düsseldorf as the main objective rather late, at 01.20 hrs, ten minutes after the opening of the attack on the city. I./NJG4, by this time short of fuel, were ordered to land at 01.22 hrs, only one crew of the 3. Staffel claiming an Abschuss near Eschweiler. Nachtjäger claimed four Düsseldorf raiders destroyed on the outward-bound route.

Whilst the controllers of the I. and II. Jagdkorps were busy organising the assembly of their fighters to engage the Düsseldorf-bound bomber stream, the German 'Y' and Radar services reported a third major threat to the I. Jagdkorps HQ at around midnight in a position roughly 100 km west of Texel. This was the force of 238 Lancasters and 17 Mosquitoes bound for Braunschweig. The stream crossed the Dutch coast between Schiermonnikoog and Texel flying on an easterly heading towards the city of Groningen. From there, the bomber force proceeded in a south easterly direction into the area south of Hannover and on to the target. In reaction to this threat, at 00.14 hrs, the JLO of 2. JD sent up a relatively small force of three Gruppen of NJG3 from Westerland, Nordholz, Stade and Vechta, which were ordered to fly to *FF Ludwig*, near Osnabrück. These Nachtjäger were then led into the bomber stream in the Emden area. In addition, I./NJG5 was scrambled from Stendal by the JLO of 1. JD and sent to *FF Philipp* (near Paderborn); these

fighters were fed into the stream to the north of this beacon. *Ritterkreuzträger* Hptm. Hoffmann, Kommandeur of I./NJG5 and his regular crew of Ofw. Köhler (BF) and Uffz. Modl (BS), for example, became airborne from Stendal in Bf110 G-4 C9+AB at 00.06 hrs. The *Zahme Sau* operation against the Braunschweig raid was severely hindered by bad weather conditions, ice clouds and impaired visibility due to haze, that prevailed over northern Germany. Consequently, this bomber force encountered only very small numbers of Nachtjäger between Osnabrück and Bremen. One 'heavy' was lost on the outward-bound track:

-463 Sqn Lancaster LL892: hit by 3./lei. Flak Abt. 845 (v), crashed and exploded 1 km NW of Nieuwolda at 01.30 hrs. Note: claimed by Flak unit as 'Mosquito Nieuwolda 01.30 hrs'.

Not until 01.45 hrs, 20 minutes after the opening of the raid on Braunschweig, were fighters seen over the target, none of which engaged any bombers. Whilst being fed with large numbers of accurate plots on the returning 'heavies' by the running commentaries of 1. and (probably) 3. JD, the Nachtjäger only became aggressive on the homeward run from south of Hannover to the north of Holland. Several combats took place and Nachtjäger claimed three Lancasters shot down, one of which (by Hptm. Schröder) was rejected by the *Abschusskommission*. Four Braunschweig raiders escaped damaged from sharp encounters with Nachtjäger. One victory was credited to Flak, seven Main Force aircraft returning with Flak scars:

-9 Sqn Lancaster ME724: hit by Grossbatterie Lünischteich, 4./schw. Flak Abt. 424 (Eisb.), Grossbatterie Bevenrade, 2./schw. Flak Abt. 165 (o), 4./schw. Flak Abt. 117 (o) and Grossbatterie Ölper, crashed at Barmke at 02.15 hrs. Note: Flak claim marked by OKL on 7 June 1944 as 'unter Mitbeteiligung der Nachtjagd' or 'achieved in co-operation with the Nachtjagd'.

On the homeward-bound route of the Braunschweig force, the mid-upper gunner of 106 Squadron Lancaster ND331 claimed an 'Me109' shot down in flames south of Braunschweig at 02.06 hrs, whilst the gunners of 619 Squadron Lancaster JB134 reported a Ju88 as probably shot down south of Hannover at 02.19 hrs. The former claim concerns the loss of Bf110 G-4 C9+AK of 2./NJG5, which was shot down in air combat at Achim near Börssum, south of Braunschweig, with the loss of Lt. Robert Wolf, an *Experte* with 16 confirmed victories to his credit. A 'friendly fire' incident occurred in the Herford area, where Bf110 G-4 D5+CP of 2./NJG3 was hit

by a Nachtjäger and went down with one engine in flames. Fw. Hans Meissner, a veteran with 12 confirmed victories and his crew all baled out safely before the Messerschmitt hit the ground at Bardüttingdorf, reportedly ca. 02.00 hrs.

At 02.41 hrs, elements of NJG2 were ordered to the IJsselmeer in an attempt to intercept the returning Braunschweig force, but these were fooled by the turn of the bomber stream in a north westerly direction to the Frisian Islands. No more bombers were lost before the stream re-crossed the Dutch coast between Texel and IJmuiden by 03.45 hrs and the Nachtjäger of NJG2, 3 and 5 that were engaged against this raid were ordered to break off the chase and land at 04.09 hrs.

The Düsseldorf raid did not escape so lightly. In the prevailing clear skies over central and southern Germany, the assembled Nachtjäger intercepted this bomber stream in force over and around the target, which was subjected to a heavy bombing attack between 01.10 and 01.38 hrs. Some 20 out of the 29 Düsseldorf raiders that failed to return were shot down by fighters in this area, many of the Nachtjäger claims being made in co-operation with Flak searchlights, and being contested by Flak of the 4. Flak Division. 20 Main Force aircraft returned with Flak damage and ten with fighter scars. Uffz. Färber, BM to the *Staffelkapitän* of I./NJG5 Oblt. Drünkler in Bf110 G-4 C9+AH, who returned to Stendal empty-handed, complained in his *Flugbuch* about the, 'strong Flak fire in the Ruhr area'. Virtually all of the Flak Abschüsse were marked 'VNE' and were subsequently

credited to twin-engined Nachtjäger. One of the very few twin-engined night fighter claims that were rejected by the OKL/RLM was submitted by an He219 crew, as Fw. Habicht, *Funker* to Oblt. Nabrich of 3./NJG1 recalls, 'We attacked a Halifax west of Düsseldorf, which crashed in flames into the target area. Since the Abschuss occurred in the Flak barrage zone, it was not credited to us, but to the Flak instead.' Hptm. Modrow and his BF Uffz. Schneider flying He219 A-0 G9+GK of 2./NJG1 destroyed three 'heavies', one (a 7 Squadron Pathfinder) in the target area and two Halifaxes of 424 and 425 Squadron in quick succession on the bombers' return route over southern Holland; a fourth *Feindberührung* went without result. Their three Abschüsse were all confirmed on 6 September 1944.

Even though most of the single-engined Wild Boar units had been withdrawn from night fighting duties in March 1944, the Wild Boars of JG300, 301 and 302 also operated in strength over Düsseldorf. Closely working with Flak searchlights, they returned with claims for nine *Viermots* destroyed, just two of which were later confirmed. Hptm. Iro Ilk, the Kommandeur of the III. Gruppe, for example, bagged three Lancaster Abschüsse, but received official RLM confirmation of his first claim only, on 2 August 1944. Hptm. Ilk achieved a total of five *Wilde Sau* Abschüsse at night during WWII, just one of which was subsequently *anerkannt* by the *Abschusskommission*.

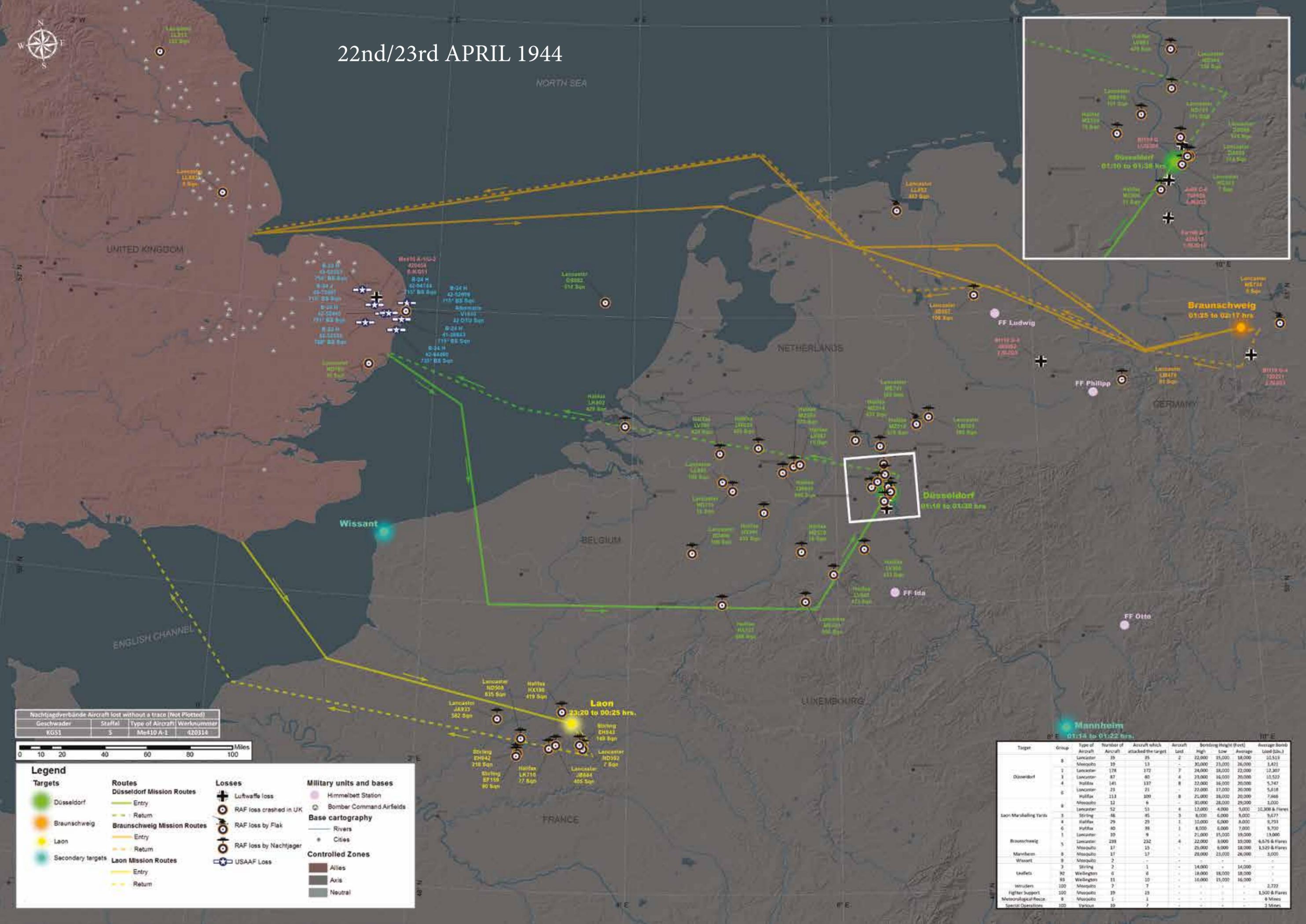
In a report that is kept in the 26. Flak Division KTB, the 4. Flak Division subsequently commented on the co-operation between Flak searchlights, Flak, and the Nachtjagd over Düsseldorf,

'The especially good weather conditions, thanks to which 107 bomber targets were picked up by searchlights and held for up to 8 minutes, made possible a successful deployment of the fighter forces over the Flak zone. Since strong fighter forces were in the vicinity of the target from the beginning of the raid, the firing restriction on the Flak at altitudes between 6,300 and 7,500 m was acceptable given weather conditions favouring the defence. The restriction still left adequate scope for the Flak to be effective.



The crew of 466 Squadron Halifax HX337, which was shot down by Lt. Helm of 3./NJG4 at Faulx-les-Tombes, SE of Namur during the 22-23 April 1944 Düsseldorf raid. Rear, l-r: Sgt. Holder (PoW); W/O Purcell (PoW); F/O Russell DFC (KIA); F/Sgt. Hall (evd). Front row, l-r: F/O Sigmont (evd); F/Sgt. Cashman DFM (KIA); F/Sgt. Quarti (MUG, replaced by F/Sgt. Draper (PoW 22-23 April 1944), probably after sustaining a slight head wound from shrapnel during the 18-19 March 1944 Frankfurt raid) (Coll. John Williams)

22nd/23rd APRIL 1944



Nachtjagdverbände Aircraft lost without a trace (Not Plotted)

Geschwader	Staffel	Type of Aircraft	Werknummer
KGS1	5	Me-410 A-1	420314



Legend

Targets

- Düsseldorf
- Braunschweig
- Laon
- Secondary targets

Routes

- Düsseldorf Mission Routes: Entry, Return
- Braunschweig Mission Routes: Entry, Return
- Laon Mission Routes: Entry, Return

Losses

- Luftwaffe loss
- RAF loss crashed in UK
- RAF loss by Flak
- RAF loss by Nachtjager
- USAAF Loss

Military units and bases

- Himmelbett Station
- Bomber Command Airfields

Base cartography

- Rivers
- Cities

Controlled Zones

- Allies
- Axis
- Neutral

Target	Group	Type of Aircraft	Number of Aircraft	Aircraft which attacked the target	Aircraft lost	Bombing Height (Feet)	Average	Average Bomb Load (Lbs.)
Düsseldorf	8	Lancaster	35	25	2	22,000	18,000	10,515
	1	Lancaster	176	172	7	24,000	22,000	13,307
	1	Lancaster	87	80	4	23,000	20,000	10,527
	4	Huffax	141	137	8	22,000	20,000	5,747
	6	Lancaster	23	21	-	22,000	20,000	5,618
Laon	8	Mosquito	12	6	-	30,000	29,000	1,000
	8	Lancaster	52	51	4	12,000	4,000	10,308 & Flares
	3	Stirling	46	45	3	8,000	6,000	8,000
Braunschweig	4	Huffax	29	29	1	10,000	6,000	8,791
	6	Huffax	80	88	1	8,000	6,000	9,700
	1	Lancaster	20	9	-	21,000	15,000	13,000
Mannheim	5	Lancaster	229	232	4	22,000	8,000	35,000
	8	Mosquito	17	17	-	25,000	8,000	13,520 & Flares
Wissant	8	Mosquito	17	17	-	28,000	23,000	26,000
	3	Stirling	2	1	-	14,000	-	14,000
Laiffels	90	Wellington	6	6	-	18,000	18,000	18,000
	90	Wellington	11	10	-	16,000	15,000	16,000
Innsbruck	100	Mosquito	7	7	-	-	-	2,727
	100	Mosquito	29	29	-	-	-	1,500 & Flares
Fighter Support	8	Mosquito	1	1	-	-	-	6 Mines
	100	Various	20	7	-	-	-	3 Mines